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A BRIEF
SUMMARY

Of what we ought to

BELIEVE and PRACTISE,

In order to our EVERLASTING

SALVATION and HAPPINESS.

By way of QUESTION and ANSWER.

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L O N D O N :

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BRIEF SUMMARY, &c.

Q. **W**HAT do all men naturally desire?

A. Happiness.

Q. How is happiness most surely to be obtained?

A. By the knowledge and practice of true religion.

Q. What do you look upon as the true religion? for all religions in the world pretend to that character, how different and inconsistent one with another soever.

A. The Christian Religion, as it is taught in the holy scriptures.

Q. Of what does this religion in general consist?

A. Of these three graces, faith, hope, and charity.

B

Q. What

Q. What is faith ?

A. A sincere belief of those doctrines which are proposed to us upon sufficient evidence, as true and necessary, or expedient for the obtaining of eternal happiness.

Q. How may we know what evidence is sufficient to prove the truth of such doctrines ?

A. Partly from the nature of the doctrines proposed to us ; which, if they contradict either reason, or the testimony of our senses, are not worthy to be believed by us ; nor if they be inconsistent with any of those attributes, which we may know, by the light of nature, to belong to the Deity ; and partly from the nature of the testimony alledged in favour of those doctrines ; which testimony ought either to be visible in the works of nature, or to consist of works truly miraculous.

Q. Therefore you think not, with the church of Rome, that the church's authority is a sufficient ground of faith, even in such doctrines as manifestly contradict

contradict reason, and the plainest testimony of our bodily senses ?

A. By no means. On the contrary, the church that requires such a blind, implicit faith and submission to her authority, convinces me by this very thing, that she does not act in it by divine commission : It not being at all probable, that God has made any thing our duty, that would open a gate to all manner of imposture. For what may not artful, and designing, and wicked men impose upon us, can they but once prevail with us to believe, upon the authority of any man, or body of men whatsoever, any thing contradictory to reason, or to the plain testimony of our senses ? which were given us by our wise Creator, partly to enable us to discover truth. By these are we to judge of the truth and meaning of revelation itself.

Q. Therefore you believe not the doctrine of transubstantiation, or that, in the Lord's Supper, there is made by the consecration of the bread and wine, a conversion or change of the

bread into the body of Christ, and of the wine into his blood ; so that, in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, there is truly, really, and substantially, the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to the creed of pope Pius IV.

A. This I will not believe upon any authority whatsoever.

Q. Or that Christ is received, whole and entire, in every consecrated wafer or bit of bread ?

A. Neither will I believe this ?

Q. What reason have you for refusing to believe these doctrines ?

A. My reason is this. That they necessarily infer these impious absurdities, that what in the Lord's Supper, after as well as before the consecration, has the colour, consistency, smell and taste of bread, is not really bread, but the very living body of Christ ; that the living body of Christ, though but one, is often eaten in many and distant places on earth, and is nevertheless at the same time residing

residing in Heaven. This I ought not to believe, even if it were avouched by a seeming angel from heaven.

Q. Why so?

A. Because I am assured that it is false and impossible, by my reason, and bodily senses; and these faculties are less liable to impose upon me, even than such an apparition contradicting my reason and bodily senses.

Q. And what think you of predestination? or of this doctrine, that God has chosen out of mankind a small number, whom he makes virtuous by the irresistible impulse of his holy spirit, and blesses with eternal felicity, for the innocency and virtue which they were never free either to chuse or to refuse; and that all the rest of mankind are doomed to eternal misery, for not performing what it never was in their power to have performed.

A. I am fully persuaded that this doctrine is false: Because my reason assures me, that it would be cruel to make creatures miserable for ever,

for what it never was in their power to have holpen, and that it is impossible for the Father of Mercies to be cruel. Therefore I will not believe it, upon the authority of any creature whatsoever.

Q. What are the principal objects of the faith of a Christian ?

A. The existence or being of God ; his providence, or watchful care over all his creatures ; and the truth of the holy scriptures.

Q. What is God as to his attributes ?

A. He is eternal.

Q. What is it to be eternal ?

A. To have neither beginning nor end of being.

Q. Therefore God always was, now is, and ever will be ?

A. Most certainly.

Q. What do you attribute to him besides eternity ?

A. Infinity.

Q. What is infinity ?

A. A manner of existence, absolutely unlimited. For whatsoever is infinite

infinite cannot be circumscribed or limited by any bounds whatsoever.

Q. What follows from these two attributes ?

A. That God is present in all times and in all places.

Q. What further do you attribute to him ?

A. Omniscience, or the knowledge of all things, past, present, and to come ; and omnipotence, or the power of doing all things, which imply not either sin or contradiction.

Q. What we have spoken of hitherto are the natural attributes of the Deity. What moral ones do you ascribe to him ?

A. Wisdom, justice, mercy, goodness and truth ; which we are principally concerned in, and which are in God in the utmost perfection.

Q. But what evidence have we of the existence of the Deity ?

A. The world, and all things in it, both animate and inanimate.

Q. How do these things testify the existence of the Supreme Being ?

A. As

A. As they are manifest effects of power directed by wisdom and goodness.

Q. How do you prove them to be the effects of power so directed ?

A. Not only by the things which exist visibly, but by the beneficial and orderly manner of their existing; whereby provision is made for the preservation and well-being of every living creature.

Q. Give me some instances of this wisdom and goodness ?

A. To begin with the sun. That glorious fountain of light and heat, is placed at so just a distance in respect of this earth, as neither to burn, nor suffer us to be frozen; and the course of it is directed in the happiest manner imaginable, to promote the earth's fruitfulness, which abounds not only with all things necessary for our sustenance, but with a vast variety of things pleasing to our bodily senses, and with remedies against such things as are disagreeable, as the extremes of cold and heat, with which we are
liable

liable to be afflicted by turns, and against even real evils, such as many bodily distempers, and unhappy accidents, which may sometimes befall us. And though some creatures seem to be intended partly to support others with the loss of their own lives, yet not being endowed with any foresight of their end, they have no troublesome apprehensions to hinder them from enjoying themselves to the very last moment.

Q. But some ascribe these things to chance, others to necessity. Might not the one or the other of these have been the original cause of all things?

A. As to chance, if we observe well, the effects of that appears so generally irregular, that if any effect of it appears regular, though in the simplest instance, we are apt to look upon so uncommon an appearance as somewhat of a prodigy. But in the works of nature no productions are so rare or scarce, as what are monstrous. In works inferior to those of nature, we ascribe nothing to chance,
which

which has the marks of design upon it. No man in his senses would ascribe a fine poem to the wanton scribbling of an idiot, or of any one who had no knowledge of what he was doing. And as the works of nature manifest design, as much (to say the least of them) as the most masterly performances of men, it is certainly a strange instance of perverseness, when we ascribe the latter to design, to impute the former to a blind unthinking principle.

Q. What you say seems very reasonable. But there are some who ascribe the existence of the world to mere necessity. What think you of their opinion?

A. These men must acknowledge, that there is in nature an infinite power!

Q. Truly I think they must. But what do you infer from thence?

A. That when all the effects of that power, as far as they come within our view, appear manifestly wise and good, how perverse were it to suppose the

the original Cause of those effects to be void of wisdom and goodness? as he must be, if not intelligent, and conscious of his own actions. For surely they cannot imagine, that the effects of power proceed from no powerful agent. This would be absurd indeed: but certainly it would be no less so, to fancy that the effects of wisdom and goodness, of which we behold innumerable instances, proceed from no wisdom or goodness in their original or first cause.

Q. You spoke of the providence of God, as one object of the faith of a Christian; what mean you by that providence?

A. God's gracious care in governing the world, and ordering the affairs of it in the wisest and best manner.

Q. Does this care of God descend to particulars?

A. Without doubt it does.

Q. But what say you to the majesty of God? Is not that an objection to a particular providence?

A. Why so?

Q. Is

Q. Is it not beneath so great a Being, to extend his care to individuals of every kind, how inconsiderable soever?

A. Were the Supreme Being so limited in regard to power, that he could not take care of little things without labour, pains and weariness, or without the neglect of weightier matters, there would be some weight in your objection. But a Being of infinite power, who is every where present and knows all things, is able also to perform all things, with equal facility. This no finite being possibly can do. Therefore it can by no means derogate from the divine majesty, to do what no being can possibly perform, who is not omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent.

Q. What instances have we of God's provident care over us?

A. To mention only a few: Our health and safe conduct through innumerable dangers which continually surround us; many narrow escapes and wonderful deliverances which

most men have experienced ; his most excellent laws, both of nature and revelation, all of them calculated for the improvement of our minds, and for our peace and welfare, both temporal and eternal.

Q. What mean you by the laws of nature ?

A. Those rules of duty which seem to be discoverable by the light of natural reason, without divine inspiration.

Q. What by the laws of revelation ?

A. Those which God has made known to us by the teaching of persons by him inspired, and sent to instruct us more fully and truly in our state and duty.

Q. Are there any such laws now extant ?

A. Undoubtedly.

Q. Where are they to be met with ?

A. In the Old and New Testament.

Q. What call you the contents of the Old and New Testament ?

C

A. The

A. The holy gospel or word of God.

Q. What reasons have you to believe them to be the word of God?

A. The purity and excellency of the doctrines and precepts; the miracles in their favour; especially the resurrection of Christ Jesus, and his visible ascension into Heaven.

Q. What you speak of, if true, is a sufficient and full proof of the truth of the gospel. But what proof have you of the reality of all this? particularly of the resurrection and ascension of Christ Jesus?

A. As good a proof as any of which past facts are capable; the testimony of some men who were eye-witnesses of the facts, which they themselves published.

Q. But might not those men be imposed upon, and made to fancy that they saw things which were never really transacted?

A. This is not at all possible.

Q. Why so?

A. Because

A. Because they had been, for some time, constant followers of our Blessed Saviour, and had conversed familiarly with him; were present at his apprehension and trial; were eye-witnesses of the circumstances of his crucifixion, death, and burial; saw and conversed often with him after his resurrection; eat and drank with him; handled him with their hands; and lastly, when the eleven apostles were all assembled together, he visibly ascended into Heaven; and that many men should fall into the same delusion, and be all fully persuaded, that they had heard with their own ears, seen with their own eyes, and handled with their own hands, what was neither heard, seen, nor felt by them in reality, is much less credible, without doubt, than the wonders which they have attested.

Q. But after all, might not the story of Christ's resurrection and ascension be a fiction, contrived by his apostles to get them a name, and

make themselves considerable in the world ?

A. What grounds are there, do you imagine, for such a suspicion ?

Q. They gained by it innumerable followers, who loved, honoured, and obeyed them, with as much zeal and affection, as ever any prince was loved, honoured, and obeyed by the most loyal subjects.

A. That was no more than was to be expected from persons convinced of the honesty and integrity of the apostles, and of the truth, excellency, and importance of those doctrines which they taught them. Nevertheless this suspicion had not been altogether groundless, had the apostles encouraged their followers to take arms and fight for them. But no such practice did they allow of. On the contrary, they chose to propagate their doctrines by preaching them diligently in many nations, and to confirm them by their own goodness of life and sufferings. This plainly demonstrates,

monstrates, that they had no ambitious motives, nor any other than a consciousness of the truth of those doctrines, which they propagated with so much labour and hazard.

Q. What were those doctrines which the apostles so industriously and zealously propagated?

A. The most fundamental are these; that Jesus whom the Jews crucified, who rose from the dead, and ascended visibly into Heaven, is the Son of God; that he was sent into the world to make satisfaction for our sins, by his own sufferings and death, and to reform mankind both by precept and example, and is ordained to be hereafter the judge of quick and dead.

Q. Whom mean you by the quick?

A. Those persons who shall be found alive on the earth, in the day of judgment.

Q. Whom by the dead?

A. All who ever have died, or shall die, from the beginning of the world to that day.

Q. What will precede this final judgment?

A. The resurrection of all men from the dead.

Q. To what end will Christ judge all men?

A. That he may render unto every man according to what he has done here in the body, whether it has been good, or whether it has been evil.

Q. Who, on that day, will be accepted of as good men?

A. Those who shall be found, in the general course of their lives, to have obeyed the dictates of reason and revelation

Q. Who will be finally rejected as bad men?

A. Those who persist wilfully in any courses which are contrary to the dictates of reason and revelation.

Q. But there may be some, who having lived wickedly a long time, at length forsake their sinful courses, and become virtuous for the remaining part of their lives; will not these be reckoned amongst the righteous?

A. We are assured that they will.

Q. What, after the day of judgement, will become of the wicked?

A. They will go away into everlasting punishment.

Q. What of the righteous?

A. They shall enter into life eternal.

Q. What mean you by life eternal?

A. A state of endless joy and felicity.

Q. Another of the christian graces you tell us is hope: What mean you by this word?

A. I mean a comfortable persuasion, that after our departure out of this life, we shall not only escape misery, but shall obtain eternal life and happiness.

Q. Wherein does the virtue of hope consist?

A. In its foundation on our honest desires to know the will of God, and diligent endeavour to please him, by the performance of those terms, upon which salvation and happiness are promised.

Q. Therefore in any person who
does

does not endeavour to please God, but persists impenitently in any habitual course of wickedness, hope is no virtue ?

A. Hope is certainly a virtue, when it leads to repentance, and amendment of life. But for a wicked man, without these to hope for salvation, favours too much of infidelity to be acceptable to God ; it being contradictory to Holy Scripture, which promises remission of sins upon no other condition, but that the wicked man consider, repent, and turn from all his transgressions.

Q. You spoke of charity as the third branch of Christianity. What mean you by charity ?

A. Love to God, and to our neighbour.

Q. What is the effect of this love to God, and to our neighbour ?

A. A godly, righteous, and sober life.

Q. What is implied in a godly life ?

A. Not only a belief that there is a God,

a God, but a pleasure and satisfaction in that persuasion.

Q. Why does it imply a pleasure and satisfaction in that persuasion?

A. Because none can be said to love God, who are not pleased with the persuasion, that there is in the universe, a Being perfectly wise, and good, and of infinite power.

Q. Therefore if there be any who wish that there were no such Being in nature, or would fain persuade themselves or others that there is none, such persons cannot possibly be supposed to love God?

A. Most certainly they cannot.

Q. But is it not also our duty to fear God?

A. Undoubtedly.

Q. How then can we love him? Are fear and love compatible affections in regard to the same object?

A. If you mean by fear, a servile dread of the Deity, as a wrathful, inexorable Being, rigorous and extream to mark what is done amiss, such a fear is hardly compatible with
a love

a love for him. But this fear is unreasonable, and by no means part of our duty.

Q. What fear then is our duty ?

A. A fear of entering into, or continuing in any courses, which we may reasonably think are displeasing to God. Which fear of God is so far from being incompatible with our love of him, that it naturally springs from it. For who fears not to displease : or, if at any time he has displeased, is not desirous of a reconciliation with the person he has a love for ?

Q. What does godliness imply further ?

A. A trust in God, or a firm confidence that he will make all things work together for good to those who love him. Which confidence will not only make us contented and chearful in a prosperous and healthy state, but patient under afflictions, as believing that it may be good for us to be afflicted, and turn out upon the whole to our advantage.

Q. Does

Q. Does not godliness imply also worship and adoration ?

A. Most certainly.

Q. How is God to be worshiped ?

A. In spirit and in truth.

Q. How may we so worship him ?

A. By offering up to him, without any mixture of idolatry and superstition, the sacrifices of prayer, praise, and thanksgiving ; not with lip-service merely, but from a sincere and honest heart.

Q. How often ought we to offer up these sacrifices ?

A. In public, at least every Lord's day ; and we ought to begin and end with prayer every day, in private. And besides these set times of public and private devotion, every blessing we receive, every affliction we suffer, every instance of divine wisdom, mercy and goodness, which occurs to us, will administer to those who love God, daily and hourly occasion to exercise one or other of these duties.

Q. What more are the effects of godliness ?

A. Honour

A. Honour to God's name, and to his word, and to his ordinances.

Q. What mean you by God's ordinances ?

A. Those rites and ceremonies which our Blessed Saviour, who acted in all things by authority from the Father, has instituted and ordained. Particularly these two plain and easy rites, Baptism and the Lord's-supper; I might add also the offering up of our prayers to God the Father, in the name of our only Mediator, Christ Jesus. These ordinances, to say the least of them, are useful and expedient, to keep up the belief and practice of Christianity. For had they not been appointed, or should they grow into disuse amongst us, we might in time forget our Saviour, and utterly lose our religion. And should Christianity once be lost amongst us, we soon lose even natural religion, and fall into the grossest idolatry and superstition.

Q. How may we honour these ordinances ?

A. By

A. By the diligent, devout, and thankful observance of them.

Q. You spoke of honour due to God's name: How is that to be performed by us ?

A. By never taking any false oath, nor swearing in our common discourse, nor using his holy name lightly in any respect.

Q. Therefore those men who are addicted, in their common discourse, to swearing and cursing, are not godly ?

A. How should they ? when they impiously make light of God's displeasure, in carelessly and proudly persisting in the practice of a sin so manifestly useless, and most expressly forbidden in Holy Scripture.

Q. What is honour to God's word ?

A. Such veneration for the Holy Scriptures, as will not suffer us to slight, ridicule, and make a jest of them ; but will dispose us to consult them with care and sincerity, as a

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rule

rule of faith and practice superior to any other.

Q. What think you of the clergy? Does not godliness include a veneration for them too?

A. Undoubtedly for their function, and consequently for the persons of those Clergymen, who disgrace not their holy function by vicious lives, or by rebellious, or slavish, or persecuting principles?

Q. What respect do you think is due to the function of the Clergy?

A. A respect great enough to induce us to consider the profession of a Clergyman, not only as honourable enough to raise a person of low birth and small fortune above the rank of the common people, and to recommend him to the respectful notice of persons of the first quality, but also of such importance as to add a lustre to any, who shall enter on it, of how great quality soever, provided they disgrace not their holy calling by bad practices, or by such unreasonable,

able, dangerous, and wicked principles, as I have already mentioned.

Q. What is due to the persons of Clergymen?

A. Not only fair and civil usage, but an high esteem for them, for their works sake, and such a grateful and tender concern for the welfare of them and theirs, as is inconsistent with those frauds which are too often put in practice, to the distressing of the most diligent, virtuous, and pious.

Q. Does not godliness imply something more than all this?

A. Yes, it implies farther, such an hearty zeal for the glory of God, as may make us desirous of promoting true piety and virtue; a sincere preference of good men to bad, without respect of persons, or regard to rank or fortune; a disposition to forego any sort of advantage, or to suffer any loss, or endure any affliction, rather than disobey God; and lastly, a desire and earnest endeavour to imitate him in his purity and goodness,

as far as the frailty of our corrupt nature will permit us.

Q. How may we best kindle the love of God in our hearts?

A. I know not any way so likely, as by contemplating often the marks of his loving kindness, observable in the numerous blessings which God has graciously bestowed upon us, even in this life; in his promise of unspeakably greater in a life to come; in the conditions upon which he offers us eternal happiness; which conditions are reasonable in every respect, and have an admirable tendency even to our temporal ease and welfare.

Q. But what think you of pestilence, famine and earthquakes? which, as they are natural evils, must befall men by the will of God, and often make a most dreadful havock, destroying promiscuously both good and bad. Do not these seem to derogate from the goodness of the Supreme Being?

A. By no means. For though they destroy promiscuously both good
and

and bad men, yet they put it not out of the power of God, amply to recompense the good and virtuous, which he has promised in Holy Scripture. And it no way derogates from God's goodness, that some men should endure short sufferings upon earth, to be recompensed hereafter with an exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

Q. Very true. But we are taught that not all men will be happy hereafter; on the contrary, that many will be unspeakably miserable. Has not such a doctrine a tendency towards lessening our love to God?

A. No reasonable one surely, if we do but consider that none but obstinate and impenitent sinners will be miserable hereafter: that the most wicked men will be pardoned, who repent and turn from their wickedness; in which good work the holy spirit of God is ever ready to assist them; and that to hate, and consequently to punish all unrighteousness

in those who will not strive to forsake it, is but suitable to the nature of a Being of absolute purity and perfection.

Q. You spoke of living righteously as another branch of charity. What is it to live righteously?

A. To perform all those duties which proceed from love to our neighbour.

Q. Who is our neighbour?

A. Any one whom we have any concern with, whether kinsman or alien, stranger or acquaintance, foreigner, or one of the same town, city, or nation.

Q. Therefore love to our neighbour implies love to man in general?

A. It does so.

Q. What are the fruits of this love?

A. Innocence and benevolence in respect of all men whatsoever; besides particular duties resulting from each one's station in life, and from the several relations we bear to one another;

another; in which duties true love to our neighbour will not suffer us to be deficient.

Q. What stations and relations are they which require particular duties?

A. The principal are these: the relation subsisting between magistrate and subject; between husband and wife, parents and children; brethren, kinsfolk, friends and acquaintance, masters and servants; and the different stations of high and low, rich and poor; betwixt all whom there are duties suited to their several relations and conditions.

Q. What is the duty of the prince or magistrate?

A. To rule with clemency, to administer justice without respect of persons, and truly to seek the ease and welfare of the subject.

Q. What of the subject?

A. To submit himself to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the king, as supreme, or unto governors appointed by him, (not as arbitrary tyrants, and

and unjust and cruel oppressors) but for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well.

Q. What is the duty of the husband ?

A. Not to teaze and vex the wife, and furlily lord it over her, but to use her in a friendly manner as an equal ; not to treat her with coldness or indifference ; not to let her suffer want or any evil that he can guard her from, but to love, cherish, and provide for her to the utmost of his power.

Q. What of the wife ?

A. To endeavour by all reasonable means to please and make herself agreeable to her husband, to consult his interest, and in prudence as well as duty, rather to submit, than ever to contend with him for the mastership.

Q. What is the duty of parents ?

A. To provide for their children's welfare, both temporal and spiritual, instructing them carefully in their duty to God and man, reproving their

their faults, correcting what they find amiss in their temper and inclinations, and training them up in a course of honest industry.

Q. What of children?

A. To honour their parents, and obey them in all things that are just and reasonable. And if their parents are in want, or any ways distress'd, to assist, comfort, and relieve them to the utmost of their power.

Q. What are the duties of brethren, kinsfolk, friends and acquaintance?

A. To be courteous, innocently obliging, and kind, in honour preferring one another.

Q. What is the duty of masters?

A. Not to tyrannize over, or use ill their servants, not to let them alone in any wickedness and debauchery, but to see that they behave soberly; to take care of them in sickness, and to give unto them what is just and equal.

Q. What of servants?

A. To serve their masters with diligence and honest fidelity, with goodwill

will doing service, not only when they have an eye over them, but also in their absence.

Q. What is the duty of the great and wealthy towards those who are inferior, or in low or poor circumstances?

A. To treat them with humanity and condescension, to pity and relieve the distressed with a chearful and ready mind, without bitterly upbraiding any with such services as they do them.

Q. What of those who are in low or poor circumstances?

A. To learn and labour truly to get their own living, without envying their superiors, or aiming, by any iniquity, to better their own condition.

Q. But let us consider the fruits of love to man in general; what mean you by innocence?

A. A forbearing to injure, or unjustly to grieve any man.

Q. By how many ways may our neighbour be grieved or injured?

A. By

A. By various in many respects ; in respect of his person, goods, and reputation ; and in respect also of his relations.

Q. What injuries is he liable to suffer in person ?

A. Murther, and other injuries, such as maiming, mutilating, bruising, or beating ; or any other contumelious bodily treatment.

Q. What is murder ?

A. The taking away the life of any man, without law, or without justice.

Q. How many ways are there of committing this crime ?

A. A man may commit a murder either by his own hand, or by the hand of an assassin, hired by him, or any way persuaded to such an inhuman act ; or by accusing any one falsely and maliciously of some capital crime.

Q. Are those only to be accounted murderers, who take away the lives of men by one or other of the ways which you speak of ?

A. No

A. No surely. Those men are little or no better, who by inhuman and cruel usage, as well shorten as make miserable the lives of those who lie at their mercy.

Q. May not a man in some circumstances be a murtherer in the sight of God, although he has never committed the fact?

A. Undoubtedly, such is the person who would kill a man if he dared to do it, or were able; or whosoever engages in a duel, by which a man runs a risque either of killing his neighbour, or being unjustly slain himself, and so becoming accessary to his own death; and all those who go upon any unlawful enterprizes, such as robberies, deer-stealing, smuggling, or any the like wicked and illegal practices.

Q. But some of these adventurers have probably no design to shed the blood of any man, and how then can you consider these men as murtherers?

A. But their design is, most probably

bably to make resistance, if any shall oppose them in their unlawful attempts; and in so doing, they may possibly kill one or other of their assailants; and the man, who being himself in an illegal and bad cause, kills his opposer, though to avoid being taken and put to death himself, commits a murder undoubtedly. And what is he better than a murderer, who engages in such practices as may draw him into a murder before he sleeps?

Q. Are there not other practices leading to this mischief?

A. Yes; cruel wounding, bruising and beating out of malice or revenge, or out of vain-glory. And even frolicks of a dangerous kind, of which some may possibly prove fatal to a neighbour; for whose life and health we ought to have a regard so tender, as to avoid doing to him any thing which may in the least endanger either.

Q. Wherein lies the sin of murder?

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A. In

A. In the contempt and cruel hatred shewn in it to our fellow-creature; in the rebellion committed in it against the clearest law of nature, which requires us not to destroy, but to protect and help each other; in the irreparable injury done in it to our neighbour, in taking from him that which we cannot restore or make him the least amends for. In a word, it is the highest transgression of this charitable and good precept, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

Q. What is it to injure a person in his possessions?

A. Either openly to invade his property by robbery, or some barefaced oppression, or secretly to do wrong to him by stealing, cheating, or taking advantage of his necessities, or of his ignorance, or unsuspecting generous nature. Whereas on the contrary, we ought to be so cautious of injuring any in their properties, as rather to run a risque of being losers ourselves, than of doing any wrong to another, either by taking away what

what belongs to him, or by keeping to our own use, what he may have a right (for aught we know) in point of equity to receive from us; whether he knows of it or no, or can obtain it by the law of the land.

Q. How may a neighbour be injured in his reputation?

A. By slander or calumny, or false stories to his disgrace or prejudice, either maliciously or wantonly invented, or rashly reported after others; which we ought to be so far from doing, as to forbear the reporting of any man even the evil we know to be true, if it be not such as justice requires us to discover.

Q. How may any one injure his neighbour in his relations?

A. By committing adultery with his wife, or fornication with his daughters or sisters, or any way corrupting the morals of his children or servants, or any who belong to him, and seducing them from their duty.

Q. Wherein does the heinousness of adultery consist?

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A. In

A. In the great mischief it does in families, by cooling and alienating the affections of man and wife, by making it doubtful to the husband whether his wife's children are his own or no, to the lessening, if not utterly destroying his paternal affection; whereby those who could help nothing may possibly be great sufferers.

Q. Wherein of fornication?

A. Partly in the disgrace and infamy brought by it, especially upon the woman; the prospect of which is often so dreadful, as to make her endeavour to avoid it by an unnatural murder, by destroying the fruit of her own body, either before or after the birth.

Q. Now in such a case, is not the man accessory to the murder?

A. In a great measure, without doubt; because he knew not but that their criminal conversation might induce the woman, by so unnatural an act, to seek to hide her own shame, as the like sin in others has often been the occasion of so bloody a practice.

Q. But

Q. But supposing this does not happen, may not the sin of fornication be greatly aggravated by some circumstances ?

A. Undoubtedly. And perhaps the greatest aggravation of it, is a cruel neglect of the issue of their unlawful embraces ; whereby the innocent child is made, by the unnatural parents, a sufferer for the crime which they had committed.

Q. As to the crime of fornication itself, are not the man and the woman equally guilty ?

A. Excepting that the seducer, which, we may suppose, is generally the man, is by much the greater offender ; though the partial world lays the infamy almost wholly upon the woman. In other respects, both of them, as co-operating in the same sin, must be equally guilty.

Q. When a man and woman, without matrimony, cohabit as man and wife, what think you of their practice ?

A. That it seems to want the blessing of God, it being for the general

rality unprosperous to the man, and always ignominious to the woman. And as marriage is every where honourable, and generally prosperous, to prefer to it such a scandalous cohabitation, argues a strange and sinful perverseness.

Q. In respect to those indeed who never injure or affront us; we ought undoubtedly to be inoffensive. But how should we behave to those who hate and misuse us? May we not revenge ourselves? May we not make reprisals? and treat them at least as ill as they do us?

A. By no means.

Q. Why not?

A. If any man should hurt your reputation by any malicious and false accusation, this cannot justify you in accusing him falsely, or treating him with any other real injustice.

Q. So that you think it is not right to give pain and trouble to a neighbour, upon any account or provocation whatsoever?

A. No truly, I do not think so. For
although

although no man would willingly suffer punishment, it is nevertheless the duty of parents, and of any who have the care of children, to chastise and punish them, as often as it is expedient, to amend and make them orderly. And other offenders may justly be punished to the same end, by stripes, fine, and imprisonment, as the quality of their crimes may deserve, and the law direct.

Q. Are we allowed then to punish upon no other consideration than with a view to the amendment of the offending party?

A. Neither is this my opinion. We may certainly act in defence of our lives, or even of our goods, against any who would unjustly deprive us of either. We may offer to defend an innocent person from the violent assaults of wicked men. We may, and sometimes it may be our duty to stand up for the public safety; and all this not only to the pain and loss, but in some cases to the undoing and death of
our

our adversaries, if no peace, or reasonable security can be had without it.

Q. But we are commanded to love our enemies. And how is this consistent with killing, undoing, or inflicting pains and penalties? all which in some cases you seem to approve of?

A. Our love to our enemies is sufficiently express'd by us in this following behaviour; in doing them no injustice, in not punishing any to gratify our anger, in not refusing to perform for them such good offices as are in our power, without injuring others, or neglecting such as deserve better of us. But should we be so tender of hurting our enemies, as rather to let them alone to the destruction or detriment, either of our country, or of our selves, or of any innocent person, this were to love our enemies better than ourselves, or innocent neighbours, or even our own country; but such an affection for our enemies is unnatural, and no where required of us.

Q. But you would not willingly receive

ceive yourself any trouble or pain from others ?

A. And therefore I would give to no man just occasion to inflict any. But as I would wish to be protected myself from the attacks and insults of unreasonable and bloody men, to protect or assist others against such, is only to do as I would be done unto. And if I may justly prosecute the unjust and cruel, in order to protect and save the innocent, why not for the defence or preservation of me or mine.

Q. What things do you hold to be justly punishable in any person ?

A. Only such actions as are criminal, or at least vicious.

Q. What think you of wrong opinions ? How are they to be encountered ?

A. What wrong opinions mean you ? any wrong opinions whatsoever ?

Q. Wrong opinions in matters of religious consideration ; for such are of greatest consequence.

A. Were I to advise in this case, I should

should recommend nothing but fair and candid reasoning.

Q. But supposing a person in error should be so obstinate, that fairly reasoning with him will work in him no reformation; might not some severities in that case be very wholesome?

A. I could wish that no man who is a peaceable and good subject, should suffer the least severities even for real errors in religion, for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God; and to endeavour to reduce men by pains and penalties, even to the true religion, upon a just and full assurance that it is the true religion, is, I am fully persuaded, little or no better than (if I may so express myself) to call in the Devil to God's assistance.

Q. Then let those who are in error keep their opinions to themselves. For if they offer to teach and propagate their wrong notions, what reason can any one alledge against their being severely punished?

A. Here we ought to consider the
nature

nature of the opinions. Should any man enthusiastically endeavour either by word or writing to engage men in traitorous plots and conspiracies, or should his erroneous notions lead him to recommend any vicious and immoral practices, a prison, or a mad-house might be a proper place for him, or he might deserve even capital punishment. But I would not wish any one to have the least hand in inflicting any pains or penalties on any, whose doctrines are neither traitorous nor immoral, notwithstanding that they manifestly err in many points, or even separate themselves from a religion in every article true, and also establish'd by the law of our country.

Q. But is not punishment very justly due to those men, who make it their business to draw men off from the true faith?

A. To allow this would be to justify persecution in false religions, where such are by law establish'd. For if it be once laid down for a rule, that those establish'd Churches which are so hap-
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py as to be in the right, may inflict punishments on such men as endeavour to propagate a wrong belief, all who do but imagine that they themselves are in the right faith, will fancy that they have a right to (and whenever they have it in their power will) punish such as dare openly to differ from them; and as mankind is so prone to err, that it falls out in most places, that more are mistaken, in many points of religion, than are in the right, to establish such a maxim would be, in effect, to let loose the weak and injudicious (than whom, generally speaking, none are more positive, nor any more furious) to worry and destroy the wisest and best of men.

Q. What course then ought we to take with those men who oppose us in any religious opinion?

A. Fairly to consider wherein they differ from us, and carefully to examine their opinions; whether they be, or be not erroneous; and if they appear to us erroneous, whether or no they

be dangerous. If they are dangerous, as Atheism, Deism, and Popery, are undoubtedly, it were good either to shun the conversation of such men as would inculcate these bad doctrines, or, if we are able, to expose their falshood and pernicious tendency, in order to dissuade as many as we can from embracing or continuing in such hurtful errors. But if the errors are no worse than what are consistent with such a belief in CHRIST JESUS, as may lead to, or is joined with the practice of a good life, we ought not to estrange ourselves from those who hold such innocent errors, but to receive them as brethren or fellow-christians.

Q. You spoke also of benevolence as an effect of love to our neighbour; what are the fruits of benevolence?

A. Good wishes to mankind in general; a disposition to oblige, as much as we can innocently, and to do good according to our several abilities.

Q. Does not love to God and our neighbour take in all charity?

A. Undoubtedly.

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Q. And

Q. And he loves God and his neighbour who leads a righteous and godly life?

A. He does so.

Q. Why then are we required to live soberly, as well as righteously and godly?

A. Because we cannot without sobriety be truly godly and righteous.

Q. In what does sobriety consist?

A. In the moderation and due government of our appetites and passions.

Q. What mean you by our appetites?

A. Our love of things in themselves desirable; such as life, reputation, riches, quiet, ease and pleasure.

Q. What is it to moderate our love of things desirable?

A. Not to set upon them a greater value than they deserve, or is consistent with our duty to God and man.

Q. What value may we justly set upon life?

A. So great a one, as not to hazard it

it in vain-glorious enterprizes ; nor peevishly or discontentedly to do any thing to get rid of it ; for this is inconsistent with that resignation, which we owe to the will of God ; nor carelessly to neglect our health and safety. But not such as to be too careful and solicitous about living ; much less ought we to endeavour to preserve life at any time with the loss of innocency and a good conscience, or of a just and fair reputation.

Q. Therefore you think that a just and fair reputation is more valuable even than life itself ?

A. I do so.

Q. And yet you condemn duelling: a practice dangerous to life indeed, but now-a-days very reputable. Were it not better to fight a man at the hazard of one's own life, than to incur the imputation of cowardice, by refusing a challenge, or taking an affront patiently ?

A. By no means ; for if duelling seem reputable, it is so only in the opinion of the impious despisers of all

laws, divine and human. And to cover the esteem of such wicked men, in seeking to procure which, you may probably ruin both body and soul, argues a love of fame unspeakably beyond all bounds of moderation; but our love of fame and reputation ought to be moderated, as well as other appetites.

Q. How should we moderate our love of fame and reputation?

A. In such a manner as never to seek it by any sinful or foolish practices; not to venture life or limb for no better purpose than to shew our courage, strength or agility; nor to aim at the praise or applause of men, by any practice that is really sinful.

Q. What value may we justly set upon riches?

A. A value so great as industriously to seek, and frugally use them; but not so extravagant as to endeavour to get them by any fraud or iniquity, or to lay them up too charily, so as not to enjoy them ourselves, or not to do any good to others; nor to repine and think our lot hard, if we happen to be
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be so situated, that our industrious labours and honest endeavours will only procure us food and raiment, but to be contented and thankful for these blessings.

Q. What upon quiet?

A. So great a value, as not unjustly, unreasonably, or unnecessarily to provoke any; but we must take care not to prize it more than truth and justice, like those who for fear of losing their quiet, dare not to declare truth, when properly called upon, nor detect the guilty, when justice requires it. These things we should at all times be ready to perform, what hatred or ill-will soever we may incur by it.

Q. How ought we to value our ease?

A. So highly as not pragmatically to meddle or make in other mens affairs, nor to be litigious in our own; but not so as indolently to neglect the welfare of ourselves or families, or not to care for the trouble of doing such acts of justice and benevolence, as it is in our power to perform.

Q. What ought to be our value for pleasure?

A. Such as may incline us so to use the blessings of this life, as not to abuse them; but not so extravagant as to induce us either by luxury, or intemperance, or an immoderate pursuit of sports and pastimes, or by mere idleness, (the great pleasure of some men) either to distress our families, or to injure or impair our own health and senses, or to indulge any appetite to the hurt or dishonour of our neighbour.

Q. What are our passions?

A. Those emotions of the mind, which are excited by good or evil, either present or future; such as love, joy, anger, grief, hope, fear.

Q. How is love to be moderated?

A. In not suffering it to lead us, as it often does fond lovers, into sinful compliances; or into foolish indulgences, like some weak and silly parents, who humour their children to their destruction; nor to make us inconsolable,

consolable, if it please God to take from us the beloved object.

Q. How must we moderate our joy?

A. So as not to suffer the receipt of any blessing to make us haughty and arrogant, and look down with contempt upon those who appear to us less happy.

Q. How our anger?

A. By guarding against anger without cause, or upon trivial occasions, and not yielding to a peevish and querulous spirit; by not suffering our anger, upon any account, to lead us into cruelty or revenge, or into sinful words and actions; and above all things, by not cherishing an unforgiving or relentless temper.

Q. How our grief?

A. By endeavouring to bear with patience any affliction or loss which may befall us.

Q. How are we to moderate our hopes?

A. By not depending much upon uncertainties, nor despairing of what good we may reasonably wish and seek for:

for : And in case of any trouble, by not cowardly giving way to desponding fears, nor by vainly and presumptuously looking for deliverance, or any good or advantage, without the use of proper means and endeavours to obtain it.

Q. How our fears ?

A. By restraining a disposition to be fool-hardy, or needlessly adventurous ; by prudently guarding against any evils to which indolence may expose us ; without harbouring an uneasy dread of any trouble that is unavoidable, or what may possibly never befall us ; and without timorously declining danger or death, if at any time true glory should call us to the encounter.

Q. By what means may we most easily moderate and govern these appetites and passions ?

A. By searching and examining our own hearts ; particularly how we stand affected to these three roots of all the evil perhaps that is committed in the world, pride, avarice, and sensuality ;

and by endeavouring to mortify and destroy these sinful and corrupt affections?

Q. What is pride?

A. An extravagant opinion of our own worth and excellence; the effects of which are self-conceit, a passionate or peevish, morose or churlish temper; such a contempt of our fellow-creatures, as not to care what the worthiest think of us, nor to regard whom we affront, and whom we injure: an insolent and impious behaviour in prosperity, and impatience under any affliction?

Q. How may we best mortify this sinful affection?

A. I know no better way, than by a willingness to search after and detect it in ourselves. And as we should look upon any of these bad qualities which I have now mentioned, as marks of it in another person, when we find the same in ourselves, we cannot reasonably deny them to be symptoms of the same distemper of mind in us. And he who once sees and acknowledges
his

his faults, will hardly fail of amendment, if he does but endeavour at it, and humbly crave the divine assistance.

Q. What is avarice ?

A. An immoderate love of money, inducing us to seek it even by unjust means, or not suffering us to do good with it, or making us discontented in moderate or in low circumstances.

Q. How may we best mortify this corrupt affection ?

A. By considering how unessential to happiness more wealth is than is necessary to procure us the common conveniences and comforts of life ; with which, if we cannot enjoy ourselves, no portion of riches will content us.

Q. What is sensuality ?

A. Too great a fondness for sensual or bodily pleasures, such as eating, drinking, and pleasures of the amorous kind. To which may be added, an excessive indulgence in sports and pastimes, and in all the pleasures of sight and hearing, so as to make them instead of recreations, the principal business of our lives.

Q. How

Q. How may we mortify this corrupt affection?

A. By considering how hurtful all pleasures are, when inordinate, either to our health, or wealth, or reputation, and some to all three; how injurious the unlawful gratification of our lust is to others, as well as dangerous to our own health; how tragical it might possibly prove in its consequences; by keeping of ourselves for the most part usefully employed, idleness being the nurse of innumerable vices.

Q. How does charity make for our happiness?

A. By enabling us for the generality to pass comfortably through this life, and by ensuring our happiness in the world to come.

Q. Are not faith and hope also conducive to the same ends?

A. Most certainly they are so.

Q. In what manner?

A. As they lead to charity; or to purity in ourselves, and the practice of all duties to God and man.

Q. Therefore of these three graces,
faith,

faith, hope and charity, charity is the most excellent ?

A. Undoubtedly it is ; though all three are necessary, and so closely connected, that it were impossible to have one in any tolerable degree of perfection, without having the other two. Let us therefore endeavour after, and continually pray for the encrease of faith, hope, and charity ; that we may obtain the precious promises of GOD in CHRIST JESUS.

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